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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: NORTH KIVU: MAI MAI AND RENEGADE SOLDIERS

Classified By: PolCouns MSanderson, reasons 1.4 b/d.

¶1. (C) During an April 12-17 trip to Rutshuru and Masisi territories in North Kivu PolCouns had a chance to meet with some Mai Mai elements near Walikale, including a new figure, Colonel Morph, and also to talk with the troublesome Colonel Smith. Four Mai Mai leaders, having evidently heard that Governor Serufuli was in Masisi territory with "an American" asked for a meeting, which took place in a small village ("Amu," name as heard by PolCouns) on a dirt road through the Masisi mountains which leads eventually to Walikale.

¶2. (C) Three of the Mai Mai were Nande speakers; the fourth was a Kinyarwandan speaker who introduced himself as "Colonel Morph," who said that he heads "patriotic resistance fighters" (the strict definition of a Mai Mai) dedicated to protecting North Kivutians from despotism. He was not willing to further define either what he considers to be despotism or how many loyal followers he might actually have, although he claimed hundreds.

¶3. (C) In general, the Mai Mai message was concise and clear, i.e., we have heard that the government may be preparing to take military action against the FDLR (as has been the case in neighboring South Kivu). We, the Mai Mai, don't really care if you attack the FDLR but if government forces enter "our" turf we will fight them. (Comment: The problem with this apparently clear separation of turf is that it doesn't actually exist outside of certain zones in Rutshuru where the FDLR are thick on the ground and Mai Mai relatively scarce. Otherwise the two groups essentially cohabit throughout the province, and particularly in the northern part, the so-called Grand North. Therefore the Mai Mai statement could be construed as a warning against attacking the FDLR for fears of provoking a larger scale conflict. End Comment.)

¶4. (C) PolCouns also met Colonel Smith, recuperating on his farm in the Masisi area from a wound sustained while fighting against FDLR in the area of Kanyabayonga (per Smith himself and Serufuli). Smith did appear to have sustained some sort of injury, as he was favoring his right side. Both Smith and Serufuli (apparently now reconciled after Smith's role in the January attack on Rutshuru) insist that Smith and his men will be taking part in brassage, but as the last of the units in the province. Serufuli said that if the existing brassage schedule is adhered to this would mean that Smith and his men will go to Kitona (their accepted destination) in early June. Smith said that he would be returning the week of April 24 to resume patrols in the area near Kanyabayonga, in particular because he is concerned about arms moving through the area. The supposed trafficking route is from Butembo (the point of entry into the Congo) through Nande Mai

Mai/FDLR territory in the Grand North (where some arms are being deposited) and into Orientale province where they supposedly are destined for Bosco's ally, Peter Karim.

15. (C) Comment: A large grain of salt is needed with all the above. Any or all of these conversations could have been staged by Serufuli, particularly to reinforce the importance of his reacquiring control of some military elements such as Smith, albeit supposedly temporarily. However, in the Byzantine world of North Kivu it also could be true that Serufuli, Smith and company are tracking the activities of rival arms traffickers, possibly sponsored by the pocket czar of the Grand North, Minister of Regional Cooperation Mbusa Nyamwisi. MONUC in Orientale province has reported that Peter Karim's militia does seem to be sporting new and improved arms in addition to an aggressive attitude, although these might as easily have been long cached as newly arrived.

End comment.

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